

**Virginia Invasive Species Council
December 15, 2004 – 11:00 a.m.
DEQ Piedmont Regional Office
4949-A Cox Road
Glen Allen, Virginia**

Virginia Invasive Species Council Members Present

W. Tayloe Murphy, Jr., Secretary of Natural Resources, Chair
Joseph H. Maroon, DCR
Robert Stroube, VDH
Ray Fernald, VDGIF for Bill Woodfin
Roger Mann, VIMS for John T. Wells
Robert Grabb, VMRC, for Bill Pruitt
Scott Johnson, VDOT, for Phillip Shucet
James Starr, VDOF for Carl Garrison III
Frank Fulgham, VDACS, for Carlton Courter III

Staff

Thomas Smith
Rick Myers
Michael R. Fletcher

Other

Mike Wilson, Center for Conservation Biology, College of William and Mary
Jennifer Allen, The Nature Conservancy
Ruth Douglas, Virginia Native Plant Society
Bill Tanger, FORVA
Greg Garman, VCU
David Fuss, MPPDC
Rex Springsten, Richmond Times-Dispatch
P.L. Hipkins, Virginia Tech
Shep Zedaker, Virginia Tech
Sarah Upshur
Lisa Moss, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Dean Cumbia, VDOF
Andrew Rich, Newport News Waterworks
Mary Williams, Dover Nurseries, Nursery Association
Bill Bolin, Dominion

Call to Order

Secretary Murphy called the meeting to order at 11:17. He thanked members for their attendance. He also thanked members of the Advisory Committee for their work since the last meeting.

Minutes of December 17, 2003 and September 4, 2004

MOTION: Mr. Fernald moved that the minutes of the December 17, 2003 meeting of the Virginia Invasive Species Council be approved as submitted.

SECOND: Mr. Mann.

DISCUSSION: None.

VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

MOTION: Dr. Stroube moved that the minutes of the September 4, 2004 meeting be approved as submitted.

SECOND: Mr. Maroon.

DISCUSSION: None.

VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

Invasive Species Advisory Committee's recommendation on an Invasive Species Management Plan

Secretary Murphy said that at the September meeting one of the directives was that the Advisory Committee be tasked with developing a recommended invasive species management plan. He called on Mr. Smith to review the committee's recommendations.

Mr. Smith noted that the Advisory Committee met in October with most members present. He noted that the first concern is determining how large the problem is and the extent of the problem the council should address.

He said that the Advisory Committee did an initial survey of agencies and organizations that are on the Council to see how large the invasive species issue is in Virginia and those agencies and organizations invasive species activities and programs.

He reviewed a chart of the agencies and organizations that deal with invasive species. He noted that a lot of work is already happening, but there is a need to continue to be better organized and better focused.

Secretary Murphy asked Mr. Smith to elaborate on the issue of agencies that have importation.

Mr. Smith explained that importation would involve agencies such as VDACS that deals with plant material being imported to the state. This does not mean that the agency is importing the material, but rather deals with the entities that do import the material. In the VDACS example, early detection would be performed by the agriculture inspectors.

Mr. Smith reviewed the section of the code dealing with the Invasive species management plan:

§ 10.1-2606. Invasive species management plan.

- Shall recommend performance-oriented goals and objectives and specific measures of success for state agency efforts concerning invasive species.
- Be developed through a public process in consultation with state agencies and stakeholders.
- Include a review of existing approaches and authorities for preventing the introduction and spread of invasive species, including ways of identifying pathways by which invasive species are introduced and minimizing the risk of introductions via those pathways.
- Identify research needs.
- Recommend measures to minimize the risk that introductions will occur.
- If recommended measures are not authorized by law, the Council shall develop and recommend to the Governor and General Assembly legislative proposals for necessary changes in authority.
- The Council shall update the management plan every three years.
- The second and subsequent editions of the plan shall evaluate and report on success in achieving the goals and objectives set forth in the previous edition of the plan.
- The plan shall identify the personnel, other resources and additional levels of coordination needed to achieve the plan's identified goals and objectives.

Mr. Smith noted that the Natural Heritage Program staff reviewed all existing plans in the U.S. and focused on two:

- National Invasive Species Management Plan
- Statewide Invasive Species Strategic Plan for Florida

Mr. Smith reviewed the Proposed Outline for the Virginia Plan:

Executive Summary

- I. Why Do We Care
- II. Prevention

- III. Early Detection
 - IV. Rapid Response
 - V. Control/Management/Restoration/Eradication
 - VI. Research and Risk Assessment
 - VII. Education and Outreach
 - VIII. Coordination
 - IX. Recommendations and Implementation
 - X. Agency Current Actions and Findings
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- I. Why Do We Care – scope of the problem, economic and ecological impacts. What have we spent and what are we spending.
 - II. Prevention
 - Identify pathways to Virginia. All aspects of trade, ports, pet trade, agriculture, building trade
 - Develop a risk assessment system
 - Develop a risk assessment for regional network for high traffic areas.
 - Consider Invasives of Highest Concern and ecosystems that are most likely to occur in
 - Education is a central element of prevention
 - III. Early Detection
 - Target species/Identification (requires taxonomic resources/experts), and structured identification process from field to expert involving extension agents, volunteers (citizens networks), and taxonomic experts network. VDACS currently has plant inspectors in the field
 - Field Methods
 - Assess existing methods and programs and recommendations for expansion.
 - IV. Rapid Response
 - What is the disconnect to early detection; often funding; consider Emergency Response Fund
 - Identify responsible agencies and authorities, Determine who has legal authority.
 - Evaluation process for rapid response when threat is identified
 - Develop general framework.
 - V. Control/Management/Restoration/Eradication
 - Rank existing invasives (prioritize what is already here) – good models exist and are being developed – time consuming
 - Rank sites
 - Rank control methods
 - Assess/Agency/organization responsibilities and actions
 - Cost share incentives programs for invasives
 - Develop individual species management plans
 - Develop and distributed management/control actions (fact sheets)
 - VI. Research and Risk Assessment

- Life history information, niche definition, physiological differences, impacts on diversity and abundance for introduced species
- Impacts on native communities – threshold targets for when and how much control
- Identify existing control methods, and develop control techniques where none exist
- Monitoring and design to optimize forecasting – to predict what areas and species are likely to be impacted
- Adaptive management – assure coordinated with research and monitoring
- Assess how to promote research needs to research community

VII. Education and Outreach

- Develop a “Website Clearing House” but recognize it does not reach all members of society
- Emphasis on educating the public and consider regions and localities
- How do we reach important targeted audiences that the Internet does not reach – personal property tax bills, newspapers, extension agents, master gardeners
- Continuing education for natural resource professionals
- State agencies which do targeted publications
- Identify existing publications for outreach (Nursery industry and association journals, sport fishermen...)

VIII. Coordination

- Agency and organization coordination is the real opportunity for the Council to “make a mark”
- What is working now and where can it be improved
- Where should ultimate responsibility lie? VA Invasive Species Council should serve this role; need institutional memory to overlap between administrations. Develop this in the strategic plan.

IX. Recommendations for Implementation

X. Agency Current Actions and Findings

Check against Act Requirements

- √ Shall recommend performance-oriented goals and objectives and specific measures of success for state agency efforts concerning invasive species.
- √ Be developed through a public process in consultation with state agencies and stakeholders.
- √ Include a review of existing approaches and authorities for preventing the introduction and spread of invasive species, including ways of identifying pathways by which invasive species are introduced and minimizing the risk of introductions via those pathways,
- √ Identify research needs
- √ Recommend measures to minimize the risk that introductions will occur.

- √ The plan shall identify the personnel, other resources and additional levels of coordination needed to achieve the plans identified goals and objectives.

Council follow up on the plan: If recommended measures are not authorized by law, the Council shall develop and recommend to the Governor and General Assembly legislative proposals for necessary changes in authority.

Secretary Murphy said that he felt the next step would be the actual development of a plan. He asked if it would be appropriate to ask DCR to take these models and make an initial draft of a plan for Virginia and then have the advisory committee review that plan. Once the committee has a more specific recommendation it could come back to the Council.

Mr. Maroon noted that the funding issue was a major consideration because there have been no real funds committed other than the proposed match from The Nature Conservancy. At this point, without the funding the agency could not hire someone to work directly on this issue.

Mr. Smith said that he envisioned the Division of Natural Heritage carrying most of the weight with a projected mid-to-late summer timeline for a draft proposal.

Secretary Murphy asked about the public notice process following that.

Mr. Smith explained that the Natural Heritage program is not regulatory and that he Advisory Committee is set up for the purpose of public comment.

Secretary Murphy said that he did not anticipate any funding for the Council prior to July 1, 2006. He said that if the funds from The Nature Conservancy are not matched the Council may have to assume that for the planning process there would be no funding.

MOTION: Mr. Maroon moved that the Virginia Invasive Species Council accepted the proposed approach as presented by the Advisory Committee for the development of the plan and further that staff move ahead with said development.

SECOND: Dr. Stroube.

DISCUSSION: None.

VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

Secretary Murphy thanked the members of the Advisory Committee for their continued work in developing the proposed plan.

Invasive Species of Highest Concern List

Dr. Myers gave a presentation regarding the Invasive Species of Highest Concern.

He noted that the Advisory Committee needed the Council to approve the direction for the compilation of this list. The Committee hoped to propose a list or a set of lists that would focus on species directly under the authority of the council.

Dr. Myers said that 2-3 years ago, VDACS organized two meetings of a Virginia Invasive Species work group consisting of some of the members of the current Advisory Committee and others. That work group had the same goal to focus on the list.

He noted that the process is about paring down a list of organisms that number in the thousands down to something that is actually manageable in terms of addressing the problem.

He noted that there are two distinct groups: 1) those that are here and well established, 2) those that need to be kept out entirely or dealt with early upon their arrival.

For those currently here the focus would be on control programs and education. For those to be kept out the focus would be on early detection, rapid response and education.

MOTION: Mr. Starr moved that the Virginia Invasive Species Council approve the proposal to develop a plan for the creation of a list of Species of Highest Concern to fit within the framework of the proposed management plan.

SECOND: Mr. Johnson.

DISCUSSION: None.

VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

Invasive Species Council Web Site

Mr. Smith gave an overview of the proposed Invasive Species Council web site.

This would be a way to distribute information regarding the Council. DCR would host the web site on their server.

Secretary Murphy noted that this could be a part of the educational process as well.

MOTION: Mr. Grabb moved that the Virginia Invasive Species Council approve development of the proposed Invasive Species Council web site as presented by staff.

SECOND: Mr. Starr.

DISCUSSION: None.

VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

Invasive Species Council Funding

Secretary Murphy noted that at the September meeting he announced that The Nature Conservancy has committed a challenge grant of \$12,000 to fund the Council work. He said that to date only an additional \$8,000 has been committed.

Mr. Maroon reviewed the commitments to date from DCR, VDOT, VDH and VMRC.

Secretary Murphy noted that if the General Assembly continues the Council beyond July 1, 2006 that he hoped there would be state funds appropriated for the funding of the Council work.

Schedule Next Meeting

No date was set for the next meeting. A June date will be considered.

Public Comment

Mr. Fernald from DGIF said that as a means of updating DGIF did release a request for proposals to eradicate zebra mussels. The deadline for proposals is January 10, 2005.

Dr. Myers noted that DCR has undertaken an aerial census of phragmites on the Eastern Shore. He said that he believed they have identified about 99% of the phragmites on the Eastern seashore. This was funded through a NOAA grant.

Adjourn

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

W. Tayloe Murphy, Jr.
Chair

Joseph H. Maroon
Recording Secretary